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**TITLE:**

**A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO COUNTERINSURGENCY:  
THE U.S. MILITARY OCCUPATION  
OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, 1916-1924**

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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## Executive Summary

**Title:** A Comprehensive Approach to Counterinsurgency: The U.S. Military Occupation of the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924

**Author:** Major Vernon T. Veggeberg, United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** Despite many early setbacks, the U. S. government's unwavering commitment to its political objectives complimented its military efforts to defeat the insurgents and establish a competent Dominican constabulary. This comprehensive approach to counterinsurgency operations enabled the United States to negotiate favorable terms in the Hughes-Peynado Accord of 1922 and successfully end its military occupation of the Dominican Republic in 1924.

**Discussion:** Prior to American intervention, the Dominican Republic was engulfed by political chaos and financial insolvency. Worried that this instability might invite European encroachment in the Caribbean, the Wilson administration's long-term solution entailed American control of Dominican financial affairs and creation of a native constabulary led by American officers. In 1916, U.S. Marines landed to push through this agenda. What ensued, however, was an eight-year military occupation of the Dominican Republic and a prolonged counterinsurgency fight in the eastern provinces of Seibo and Macoris.

Yet, by 1920 the military occupation was not going well for the Americans. Militarily it was a stalemate; the Marines were no closer to defeating the insurgents in the eastern provinces than they had been in 1917. The *Guardia Nacional* was still in shambles. It was commanded almost entirely by Americans and the Dominicans soldiers had virtually no training. The United States also was losing the war of ideas. Hard-line Dominican nationalists had effectively sold their message of immediate and unconditional American withdrawal, and United States faced growing criticism at home and throughout Latin America of its Caribbean interventions.

However, through a concerted American effort and comprehensive approach, the situation changed dramatically in less than 18 months. The Marines revamped the *Guardia* and established a comprehensive training plan. The next American boost came when newly-elected President Warren Harding, despite his earlier criticism of Woodrow Wilson's interventionist Caribbean policies, dashed the hopes of hard-line Dominican nationalists for a precipitous American withdrawal by adopting virtually every aspect of the Wilson Plan. The U.S. Senate's Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo offered additional support by downplaying the political rhetoric related to its investigation into alleged atrocities by Americans serving in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Then, in 1921-22, the U.S. Marines conducted an offensive that ultimately crushed the insurgency and forced every major guerrilla leader to surrender.

These political and military successes combined to alienate the hard-line Dominican nationalists and defeat the insurgents in the eastern provinces. This, in turn, enabled the U.S. Department of State to negotiate favorable terms into the Hughes-Peynado Accord of 1922 and withdraw American forces from the Dominican Republic in 1924.

**Conclusion:** The United States eventually developed a comprehensive counterinsurgency approach that leveraged both political and military successes. Each victory served to complement the others, and synchronizing these efforts enabled the United States to finally end its military occupation of the Dominican Republic while still accomplishing its objectives.

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## *Preface*

In January 2000, I reported for duty at the U.S. Naval Academy where I served for three years as an instructor in the History Department. During that assignment, I taught three different courses, but my favorite was "History of the Marine Corps." During the months I spent preparing for the classes and lectures, my fascination for Marine involvement in the so-called "Banana Wars" grew. U.S. armed intervention in Latin America certainly was controversial at the time and it remains so today. Nevertheless, I found it interesting that U.S. Marines spent 35 years conducting counterinsurgency operations in Latin America. In light of current military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, I also found it remarkable that three of these hard-fought counterinsurgency campaigns entailed long-term military occupations of a foreign country, and all three generally ended in American successes – at least in purely military terms.

Yet, historical assessments of the three major commitments undertaken by U.S. Marines in the inter-war era is not balanced. Generally, there is more scholarship on the interventions in Nicaragua and Haiti, but there has only been one book-length study written on the U.S. intervention/occupation of the Dominican Republic (1916-24) – and it was published in 1984. Historians, however, are not the only ones to brush aside these Caribbean campaigns. In 2005, an Army Major-General who had served in Operation Iraqi Freedom traveled to Okinawa and spoke to my battalion about some of the difficulties American forces were then facing in Iraq. During the question and answer period, I asked him if we, the U.S. military, were looking to some of our successful historical models for ideas on how to defeat the insurgency? I believe his answer accurately reflects the lack of knowledge about a significant phase of U.S. military history: "I don't know of any successful models, unless you want to call Vietnam a success. This is uncharted territory. We need to come up with new solutions to new problems."

We live in a world that is ever-changing. However, it is also useful to remember that we can learn from our past experiences. It is reasonable to think that after 35 years of counterinsurgency operations, the Marine Corps might have learned some lessons that could be helpful on today's battlefields. Of course, one must also caution against a simple, cookie-cutter approach. Haitian *cacos* are not Al Qaeda, and patrolling the jungles of Nicaragua is not like driving a gun-truck through Fallujah. Significant disparities exist between then and now: circumstances, societies, issues, and our objectives are all different. Nevertheless, to think that everything we are now doing in Iraq is new and uncharted is erroneous. This study is one such excursion into the past, and the Dominican Republic shows how the United States effectively leveraged political and military means to defeat an insurgency and negotiate the withdrawal of U.S. forces while still accomplishing the stated American objectives.

I relied heavily on primary and secondary sources to shape my interpretation of these events. Bruce Calder's *The Impact of Intervention* (1984) was of immense value, since it is the most comprehensive study to date on this event and is based on English and Spanish sources that are meticulously cited. I also benefited from Stephen Fuller and Graham Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic 1916-1924* (1974); Ivan Musicant, *Banana Wars* (1990); and Alan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis* (1980). The following primary sources proved especially useful: Record Groups 39 and 45 at the National Archives in Washington, D.C; articles published by Marines in *The Marine Corps Gazette* from 1918 to 1941; the geographical and biographical files at the U.S. Marine Corps History Division in Quantico, Virginia; Sumner Welles' two-volume history of the Dominican Republic, *Naboth's Vineyard* (1926); and Dana Munro's *The United States and the Caribbean Republics* (1974). All of the above sources were useful, but none has effectively

demonstrated how the United States used a comprehensive strategy to defeat the insurgency and effectively end the U.S. military occupation of the Dominican Republic.

I first would like to thank the head of my thesis committee, Dr. Donald F. Bittner. I sincerely appreciate the time he spent with me throughout the year at Marine Corps Command & Staff College and the effort he put into making this study a better product. Despite his very busy schedule, he quickly answered my repeated e-mail inquiries and dedicated hours with me to discuss it and other historical topics. His guidance and mentorship have not only made me a better historian; he has also helped me grow as a Marine – for that I am truly grateful. I also would like to thank Mark Mollan at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. for his assistance in locating those records that proved most pertinent to my study; this enabled me to maximize the effectiveness of each trip into the capital. I would also like to thank the entire staff at the Marine Corps History Division. They were professional, courteous, and extremely helpful in guiding my through their extensive files. I am also grateful to the staff at the Gray Research Center. They helped narrow my search in their Archives and Special Collections and obtained several sources for me through interlibrary loan.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family for having the patience to, once again, share me with the Marine Corps. I realize this was difficult after four years of overseas duty and promises that this year would be an opportunity to catch up on lost time. The latter never fully materialized; nevertheless, I thank them for patiently waiting for me to come out of my home office and being ready to play and have fun when I eventually did. Heather, Samuel, and Lianne, you are my whole world, and I love you all dearly.



*It is much easier to begin an intervention than to end it. It is a relatively simple matter to send in troops. But once they are there,...the necessity of keeping them there grows day by day....There is also a classic catch-22: if there is no pressure to end an intervention, it continues; but if there is pressure, the occupiers resist, not wanting to appear to withdraw because of the pressure.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Bruce J. Calder, *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic during the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), xxii.

By the time Juan Isidro Jimenez was elected President of the Dominican Republic in 1914, he was simply the latest to walk through what had become a revolving door of Dominican politics. The country had endured 43 presidents and 19 constitutions in 70 years.<sup>1</sup> Compounding these problems was another reality: revolutions were expensive. Each successive leader not only had to raise an army to defeat his rivals, but, once in office, he also needed to placate his subordinates by divvying up the national treasure. The net result was that, by 1916, the Dominican Republic was engulfed by political chaos and faced a gargantuan national debt. To help infuse some stability, the United States landed 150 Marines in May 1916 to bolster President Jimenez against rival Dominican factions attempting to oust him. What ensued was an eight-year military occupation that constituted one of the longest counterinsurgency campaigns in American history. Despite many early setbacks, the U. S. government's unwavering commitment to its political objectives complimented its military efforts to defeat the insurgents and establish a competent Dominican constabulary. This comprehensive approach to counterinsurgency operations enabled the United States to negotiate favorable terms in the Hughes-Peynado Accord of 1922 and successfully end its military occupation of the Dominican Republic in 1924.

### **BACKGROUND & INTERVENTION**

The American intervention in the Dominican Republic can be traced back to President Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. Although the Monroe Doctrine had long proclaimed American opposition to European interference in the Western Hemisphere, before the 20<sup>th</sup> century most Europeans did not take this seriously. Hence, when Venezuela defaulted on loans from several European banks in 1902, those countries felt justified in collecting their past-due debts with the threat of force.<sup>2</sup> However, if the United States allowed

military intervention by European powers, then what would prevent these countries from using debt collection as a ruse for establishing spheres of influence that threatened the Panama Canal?<sup>3</sup> Yet, the United States could not ethically prohibit Europeans from collecting their just debts, because doing so would constitute American approval of reckless behavior by irresponsible Latin American governments. President Theodore Roosevelt recognized this contradiction in American foreign policy and published his Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine in which he stated: "If we are willing to let Germany or England act as the policeman of the Caribbean, then we can afford not to interfere when gross wrongdoing occurs. But if we intend to say 'Hands off' to the powers of Europe, then sooner or later we must keep order ourselves."<sup>4</sup> Thus, protecting U.S. interests, including the Panama Canal, entailed policing Caribbean countries in order to stave off European encroachment.<sup>5</sup>

The Roosevelt Corollary was first put to the test in 1905 in the Dominican Republic. Continued rebellions and mounting Dominican debt to several European countries prompted the United States to look for a more comprehensive solution than simply landing Marines to keep the peace. The result was a *modus vivendi* between the United States and the Dominican Republic which gave the U.S. President authority to appoint an official to head the Dominican Customs Receivership, dispense funds, and pay off all Dominican debts to foreign powers. The two countries then codified this agreement in a treaty that was ratified in 1907. The fact that this treaty consolidated all Dominican debts to foreign powers into one \$20 million loan from an American bank seemed to offer further protection against European intervention in the Dominican Republic.<sup>6</sup>

However, when President Woodrow Wilson took office in March 1913, his strong sense of moral purpose and proselytizing approach to foreign policy prompted him to take an even

more aggressive approach in the Caribbean. He vowed to teach the Latin American republics "to elect good men," and, in so doing, he intervened in the domestic affairs of these countries more than any other American president – most notably in Mexico, Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic. Furthermore, by 1915 it was clear that the 1907 treaty had failed to correct Dominican financial problems, as leaders of successive coups took turns looting the national coffers before they too were ousted by their rivals. There was also widespread belief in the Wilson administration (with some justification) that Germany continued to seek a foothold in the Caribbean.<sup>7</sup>

To end this destructive cycle of political upheaval and mitigate the deepening financial sinkhole that accompanied it, Wilson looked for more comprehensive reforms. He demanded that President Juan Jimenez: (1) grant the United States control of virtually every aspect of Dominican finances, to include collecting and disbursing the customs revenues; and (2) dissolve the Dominican armed forces and replace them with a constabulary commanded by an American officer appointed by the U.S. President.<sup>8</sup> However, President Jimenez resisted such measures because he knew that acquiescing to Wilson's demands would ignite hostility from the Dominican people that would surely result in his political downfall. Regardless, Wilson remained steadfast in his demands of fiscal solvency and political stability through strict American control of both internal finances and a professional constabulary. Both factors would form the basis of American policy in the Dominican Republic and would become trademarks of Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy throughout Latin America.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, when Captain Frederick M. Wise (USMC) landed in Santo Domingo City with 150 Marines in May 1916, his duty went far beyond the typical Marine mission of "protecting American lives and property."<sup>10</sup> Wise was tasked with sorting out internal Dominican affairs by

helping President Jimenez defeat the rebel General Desiderio Arias and 250 of his armed rebels.<sup>11</sup> The situation, however, grew even more complicated once the Marines were ashore. Despite the fact that President Jimenez had solicited American assistance, when it came time for the Marines to expel Arias and his rebels from the capital city by force, Jimenez changed his position. Rather than be perceived by the Dominican people as a leader who consented to an American invasion, Jimenez resigned from office. Regardless, more Marines poured into the country and, within days, General Arias evacuated Santo Domingo City. He retreated north to Santiago where he finally disbanded his army in July 1916. Arias' capitulation ended the conventional phase of military operations in the Dominican Republic.<sup>12</sup>

#### **SETBACKS AND STALEMATE: 1917-1920**

Yet, this did not end the fighting in the Dominican Republic. What ensued was an eight-year military occupation in which U.S. Marines conducted a grueling counterinsurgency campaign against Dominican guerrillas. However, throughout the conflict Woodrow Wilson remained steadfast to his policy of fiscal solvency and political stability. He reiterated in the summer of 1916 that, in order to gain American recognition, Jimenez's successor would have to: (1) allow American authorities to collect the customs revenues and (2) disband the Dominican army and establish a professional constabulary officered by Americans.<sup>13</sup> On 25 July 1916, the Dominican Congress elected Francisco Henriquez to a six-month term as provisional president. Like Jimenez, however, Henriquez knew that relinquishing the level of sovereignty demanded by the Wilson administration would result in political suicide; hence, he refused to comply.<sup>14</sup> After months of accusations and recriminations by both American and Dominican leaders, the United States placed the Dominican Republic under military rule on 29 November 1916 and appointed Captain Harry S. Knapp (USN) as the Military Governor of Santo Domingo.

The intent of the Military Government was to continue with Dominican control of daily governmental operations while American officials implemented political, military, and economic reforms. Dominican law would still be in effect, but the goal was to minimize the impact of the U.S. occupation on the daily lives of individual citizens. American military officers would supervise many aspects of government, but most Dominican political officials and governmental employees would continue to serve in their current positions. However, within ten days of the Military Government's inception, all Dominican cabinet officials resigned in protest, and President Henriquez left the country on 8 December.<sup>15</sup> The United States thus found itself in control of virtually every aspect of Dominican government. Although American military officers had virtually no training for such duties, they nevertheless filled most of the vacant governmental positions.

Despite these setbacks, the Military Government began implementing the reforms it felt were necessary to achieve President Wilson's goals of political stability and fiscal solvency. Since there was virtually no armed resistance after Arias disbanded his army, Marines dispersed into small detachments near the largest cities and spent most of their time disarming the population and carrying out general police duties. American officers also revamped the national treasury and tax systems, and, on 7 April 1917, the United States created a national constabulary, called the *Guardia Nacional Dominicana* (GND).<sup>16</sup> Military Governor Knapp also initiated several public works projects and social reforms that included constructing the first Dominican road network, enacting new land title laws, and expanding and improving the educational, public health, sanitation, and penitentiary systems. By the spring of 1917, many Dominicans had returned to their jobs and it appeared that the country was accepting the American occupation. In fact, it seemed that in just one or two more years the United States might be able to turn over

to the Dominican people a government with much-improved political, financial, and military institutions.<sup>17</sup>

This perception was bolstered by the fact that, throughout 1917 there were few signs of a growing insurgency. However, over the course of the next year, this situation changed dramatically. On 6 April 1917, the United States declared war on Germany and entered World War I. The net effect in the Dominican Republic was a sharp decrease in American troop strength, as the number of Marines stationed there dropped by 25% and remained low until after the armistice in November 1918.<sup>18</sup> This not only meant that there were fewer Marines to patrol the countryside; it also crippled development of the *Guardia Nacional*.

Facing a severe manpower shortage, Marine leaders scrapped any plans of formal training for the *Guardia* and, instead, dispatched freshly-recruited units to far-flung outposts where they received “on the job” training from local Marine leaders.<sup>19</sup> The official U.S. Marine history of the Dominican intervention noted that, “Systematic training of the [*Guardia*] officers and men proved to be almost impossible, as companies had to take to the field as rapidly as they were formed....Few of the Marines themselves had received any special instruction in constabulary work.”<sup>20</sup> Compounding these challenges was the fact that the force requirements in France specifically focused on junior officers and senior non-commissioned officers – the same ranks that were most-needed to train the *Guardia*.<sup>21</sup> Junior Marines, therefore, had to fill the ranks of sergeant through lieutenant in the *Guardia*. Hence, not only were there too few Marines to suppress the insurgency when it erupted in the spring of 1918, but there was also a particular dearth of leadership at the tactical level where it was needed most.<sup>22</sup> Both factors combined to bring poorly-trained *Guardia* units led by inexperienced Marines into direct contact with a Dominican population that was (unknowingly to the Marines at the time) on the verge of revolt.

By the spring of 1918, Marines were confronted by armed Dominican guerrillas determined to fight them.<sup>23</sup> The insurgency, however, was not countrywide; it erupted almost exclusively in the eastern provinces of Seibo and Macoris. This region was particularly fertile for rebellion against any centralized authority due to a lack of roads, thinly dispersed population, and numerous foreign-owned sugar plantations that routinely exploited the local citizens. Add to this the fact that the *caudillo* tradition was more deeply ingrained in this region, and it is not surprising that, while most Dominicans acquiesced to American military rule, those living in the eastern provinces were more hostile.<sup>24</sup>

Marine leaders at all levels experimented with different tactics to gain the upper hand.<sup>25</sup> In 1918, Colonel George C. Thorpe attempted to separate the insurgents from the population by rounding up citizens who lived in rural eastern provinces of Seibo and Macoris and resettling them in large camps near the town centers. The next year, Brigadier General Ben H. Fuller attempted to improve unity of command and focus the effort of combat operations in the eastern provinces by reorganizing the military command structure with the creation of the Eastern Military District. Colonel James C. Breckinridge also conducted a vigorous information campaign with Civil Governor Antonio Ramirez, as the two gave grassroots speeches in villages throughout the eastern region in an attempt to pacify the population. Unfortunately, all these efforts failed. After three years of aggressive patrolling, the Marines had grown frustrated: they had little to show for their efforts in the eastern provinces but sore muscles, worn out boots, and an increasingly hostile Dominican populace. By 1920, they were no closer to defeating the insurgents than they had been in 1917, and the counterinsurgency campaign in Seibo and Macoris ground to a stalemate.<sup>26</sup>



Unfortunately for the Marines, the *Guardia Nacional* was in no condition to provide assistance. Faced with an insurgency that seemed to grow with each passing year and still hit hard by troop quotas for duty in France, the Marines temporarily shelved any real efforts to develop a national constabulary.<sup>27</sup> Recruiting efforts lagged, due as much to a lack of emphasis by Marine leaders as to the growing sense of Dominican resentment against the military occupation. By 1920 Americans continued to fill virtually all officer billets in the *Guardia*. However, those officers who did serve in the *Guardia* did not do so for long, which was another indication of the low priority given to developing the GND during this phase of the campaign. "Of the six Marine officers who headed the *Guardia* between 1917 and 1921, only one...held the job longer than seven months."<sup>28</sup> This astounding turnover rate further compounded the problems of developing a formal comprehensive training plan for the GND. *Guardia* soldiers still received only cursory on-the-job training from junior Marine leaders who were filling positions well above their normal rank and who themselves were not particularly prepared to conduct counterinsurgency operations. The net result was that, by 1920, the *Guardia Nacional* was still in shambles.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, the United States was getting trounced on the political front. Former Presidents Francisco Henriquez, Juan Jimenez, and several other Dominican leaders had formed a nationalist political movement in 1916 with the expressed purpose of ending the American military occupation through political pressure.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, by 1920, the Dominican nationalists had gained several Latin American allies. Uruguay and Brazil issued official statements supporting the Dominican claim that the United States was conducting an oppressive military occupation of a sovereign nation without any legal right to do so; hence, Washington should withdraw its forces immediately and unconditionally. The Dominican nationalists gained

a more attentive audience when World War I concluded in 1919, and the United States gradually came under growing pressure (both domestically and throughout Latin America) to withdraw its troops from the Dominican Republic. Events looked most encouraging for the hard-line Dominican nationalists when Warren G. Harding, a man who had criticized Wilson's interventionist Caribbean policy while campaigning for president, won the 1920 U.S. presidential election. Then, in the last few months of his administration, Woodrow Wilson issued a plan for the gradual withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Dominican Republic. These events must have seemed ominous to the Military Governor in Santo Domingo and the Marines patrolling the eastern provinces. From their perspective, only one word could have accurately described the possibility of withdrawing prior to completing the mission – defeat.<sup>31</sup>

### **THE DECISIVE PHASE: 1921-22**

However, in 1921 the United States implemented a comprehensive approach to counterinsurgency operations that, in less than 18 months, completely changed the situation in the Dominican Republic. The first indication of this reversal lies in a closer examination of the Wilson Plan, issued in December 1920.<sup>32</sup> Although Woodrow Wilson did call for an end to the military occupation of the Dominican Republic, his plan did not demand a precipitous withdrawal. The process was to begin with appointment of a Commission of representative Dominican citizens who would be assisted by an American technical advisor. This group's task was to formulate "amendments to the Constitution and a general revision of the laws of the Republic," all of which had to be approved by the Military Government, a constitutional convention, and the Dominican National Congress.<sup>33</sup> In short, the terms Wilson offered in late 1920 were essentially the same as the ones he demanded from Jimenez and Henriquez in 1916. Not surprisingly, the hard-line nationalists found the constitutional amendments and requirement

for approval by the Military Government particularly reprehensible. They also believed that the remaining terms were so vague and open to American abuse that they flatly rejected the Wilson Plan. Bolstered by Harding's upcoming presidential inauguration and his past criticism of Wilson's interventionist foreign policy, the Dominican nationalists further entrenched themselves in what became their mantra – U. S. withdrawal *pura y simple* (pure and simple).

The Wilson Plan and Harding's presidential victory had significant impacts on the Military Government in Santo Domingo. Convinced that the occupation's days were numbered, the Military Governor finally set about fixing one of the most vital, but up to that point least nurtured, elements of the American occupation – the *Guardia Nacional*. To demonstrate this renewed interest in establishing a professional constabulary and in an attempt to break away from Dominican perceptions of past *Guardia* ineptitude and oppression, the Military Government renamed the *Guardia* the *Policia Nacional Dominicana* (PND). It also embarked on a vigorous recruiting campaign and made genuine attempts to weed out substandard soldiers. This effort gained even more momentum when, on 1 June 1921, Lieutenant Colonel Presley M. Rixey (USMC) was appointed Commandant of the PND. According to one of Rixey's subordinates, Lieutenant Edward A. Fellowes (USMC), the new Commandant of the PND made, "the first definite and practical effort to raise the Constabulary to the necessary strength and properly train and equip this force."<sup>34</sup> Rixey's plan consisted of establishing two PND training centers at Haina and Santiago. There Marines would indoctrinate new recruits and conduct sustainment training for more seasoned troops as they rotated from their outposts once a year for month-long periods of instruction. The training focused mostly on military administration, tactics, musketry, topography, first aid, hygiene, and agriculture.<sup>35</sup> Haina also hosted a five-month officer training course that probably did more to professionalize the Dominican

constabulary than any other single effort. Thus, the Marines finally focused on creating a national constabulary, and these efforts would prove critical to the success of the 1921-22 military campaign and the overall American exit strategy.<sup>36</sup>

The next major milestone toward successfully ending the American military occupation of the Dominican Republic occurred on the political front. The Harding administration first sought to improve Dominican policy by swapping out military leaders in Santo Domingo. According to one State Department official, "Rear Admiral [Thomas] Snowden, the military governor, had little contact with the Dominican leaders, and he had aroused animosity by public statements reflecting on their ability to manage their own affairs."<sup>37</sup> Therefore, in June 1921, the U.S. Navy dispatched Rear Admiral Samuel S. Robison to relieve Snowden as Military Governor. One of Robison's first duties was to deliver to the Dominican people what would become known as the Harding Plan.

Contrary to the hopes of hard-line Dominicans advocating *pura y simple* American withdrawal, the Harding Plan did not constitute a drastic change in American-Dominican policy. It was essentially the same as the Wilson Plan. However, it was even more specific in its prerequisites for an American withdrawal: ratification of all acts of the Military Government, validation of a \$2.5 million loan, continued U.S. control of the customs receivership (including internal revenues), and training of the national constabulary by American officers.<sup>38</sup> The only change from the United States' consistent position since 1916 was that the constabulary no longer had to be commanded by Americans; it only had to be trained by them. This change in position was likely due to American confidence that LtCol Rixey's recent overhaul of the PND would soon yield a professional force capable of maintaining peace and stability.<sup>39</sup> Of course, the above benchmarks for American withdrawal were nowhere near the *pura y simple* position of

the Dominican nationalists. Once announced publicly on 14 June, the Harding Plan met with what the senior U.S. diplomat in the Dominican Republic, U.S. Minister William Russell, described as a "hot blast of protest from the [local] press," and, not surprisingly, the nationalists rejected it outright and refused to negotiate.<sup>40</sup> Nationalist hopes that the Harding administration would precipitously withdraw from the Dominican Republic were quickly fading, and both sides searched for ways to break the political and military stalemate.

The nationalists' last real bid for a political victory hinged on a U.S. Senate investigation into alleged atrocities by American forces serving in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In July 1921, one month after promulgation of the Harding Plan, the U.S. Senate appointed the Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo to investigate these charges and make an overall assessment of each occupation. The impetus for this measure was the success of Dominican (and Haitian) lobbying that brought the United States under increasing domestic and Latin American pressure for its interventionist Caribbean policies. "The nationalists were convinced that the revelations from these hearings would cause the United States such great international and domestic embarrassment that the State Department would become far less concerned with the exact details of withdrawal."<sup>41</sup> The committee took sworn testimony in the United States and then traveled to Hispaniola in December 1921, where it heard from Dominican witnesses. This testimony described numerous acts of abuse endured by individual Dominicans that caused some alarm, but the final Senate report fell short of creating the international outcry that Dominican nationalists needed to pressure the United States into an immediate withdrawal. In fact, the committee even refused to make a recommendation regarding U.S. withdrawal, choosing instead to abstain from such a recommendation pending the resolution of current negotiations regarding the Harding Plan. The fact that this was a Republican-controlled Senate probably had much to

do with the committee's deference to ongoing diplomatic efforts by a Republican presidential administration. Nevertheless, the Senate's silence marked the death knell for Dominican nationalist hopes for a political victory. Quickly thereafter, solidarity among the nationalists began to unravel as individuals realized that they probably had no other option than to work within the parameters of the Harding Plan.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the political victories brought on by President Harding's adherence to Woodrow Wilson's original policy objectives in the Dominican Republic and the U.S. Senate's downplaying of inflammatory rhetoric in support of ongoing negotiations for the Harding Plan, the real turning point in the Dominican Republic came with the military campaign of 1921-22. Designed by Brigadier General Harry Lee (USMC), Commander of the 2d Provisional Marine Brigade, and Lieutenant Colonel William C. Harllee (USMC), Commander the Eastern Military District; it showed a sophisticated understanding of counterinsurgency operations.<sup>43</sup> Their "carrot and stick" approach entailed a vigorous military campaign that inflicted heavy casualties on the insurgents without alienating the local Dominicans. This was complimented by a generous amnesty program that resulted in the surrender of almost 200 guerrillas by May 1922. However, both Marines understood that in order for an amnesty program to be effective the guerrillas must first feel the sting of battle; that is, they must have a reason to surrender.

To force this decision on the enemy, Military Governor Samuel S. Robison and BGen Harry Lee lobbied for and obtained an increase to the overall troop strength in the Dominican Republic. Lee and Harllee then flooded the eastern provinces with combat power. General Lee sent units from the recently reorganized *Policia Nacional* eastward and placed them under LtCol Harllee's command. Those PND units not yet ready for active patrolling took over U.S. Marine outposts in the north and south so that the entire 15<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment could mass in the eastern

provinces. Marines also used recently-acquired portable field radios and aircraft from the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Squadron to improve communication and reconnaissance. Then, in an attempt to employ this larger force more effectively, the Marines shifted from squad/platoon-size patrols to large-scale cordon operations. Over a period of five months, Marines conducted nine such operations that helped isolate the guerrillas from the civilian population.<sup>44</sup>

Lee and Harllee also conducted major raids in areas that heretofore had been considered *caudillo* sanctuaries. To help locate these areas, General Lee created civil guard units, called *guardas campestres*, which combined ten Dominican civilians with a handful of Marine leaders.<sup>45</sup> Lee authorized the formation of several of these civil guard units in March 1922. The *guardas* helped roust the insurgents from their hideouts, and the Marines inflicted heavy casualties as the guerrillas scrambled to escape from converging Marine patrols guided by Dominican *guardas*. The new tactic proved that blending Marine tactics, firepower, and tenacity with Dominican knowledge of the terrain, language, and customs was a particularly lethal combination. According to General Lee, the raids conducted by these combined forces broke the back of the insurgency and "led to the disintegration of the bandit groups."<sup>46</sup>

However, General Lee and LtCol Harllee realized the futility in trying to track down and kill every insurgent in the Dominican Republic. They hoped leniency would compel the remaining guerrillas to lay down their arms and surrender. In early April 1922, the Military Governor authorized several prominent Dominican civilians to negotiate with the foremost *caudillos* still at large to get them to surrender. Timing was crucial, since this diplomatic effort began just as Lee's civil guard campaign commenced. By the end of the month, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Commander had received enough positive feedback on his amnesty offer that he halted all offensive operations and called for an armistice. Lee enhanced the deal by offering to suspend

prison sentences on the condition of good behavior. Coupled with the 1921-22 military offensive of relentless patrolling by Marines, *Policia*, and *guardas*, this lenient amnesty program convinced seven important *caudillos* to surrender, along with 169 of their most dedicated followers. Thus, within two months, every major armed group had surrendered, and the insurgency was defeated.<sup>47</sup> On 31 May 1922, Brigadier General Lee officially announced that the Dominican Republic was completely pacified.

Concurrent with this decisive military offensive was a renewed diplomatic effort by the U.S. Department of State to negotiate a settlement for withdrawing U.S. forces. However, the United States remained firm in its commitment to its original objectives of Dominican political stability and financial solvency. In 1922, this specifically meant: (1) continued U.S. control of the customs receivership in accordance with the 1907 treaty, at least until all current loans were paid off; (2) ratification of the acts of the Military Government, especially those pertaining to rights or obligations of citizens or the government; and (3) successful completion of the military mission, i.e. turning over security operations to a constabulary (i.e. *Policia Nacional*) which was capable of maintaining law and order. In January 1922, Military Governor Robison and U.S. Minister Russell traveled to Washington to meet with Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes about these issues. At their meeting, all three agreed to stand firm in their commitment to the Harding Plan. Hence, when the Dominican nationalists refused to initiate the elections required by the Harding Plan, the Military Governor held his ground by issuing a proclamation stating that the American occupation would continue until 1 July 1924.<sup>48</sup>

Fed up with what he likely determined was bullheadedness on the part of both the Military Government in Santo Domingo and the Dominican nationalists, Francisco Peynado, a distinguished Dominican lawyer, traveled to Washington on his own initiative to attempt to



negotiate terms for an American withdrawal.<sup>49</sup> Peynado found that Secretary of State Hughes was reasonable, and the two men soon reached common ground. Under what became known as the Hughes-Peynado Accord, the United States agreed to appoint a commission of five Dominican leaders who would choose a provisional president and cabinet. This provisional government immediately would take control of all governmental functions necessary to hold elections and prepare for assumption of authority from the Military Government. Peynado did not resist continued U.S. control of the customs receivership until the current loans were paid off or ratification of those legislative acts by the Military Government pertaining to rights and obligations. His main objection centered on the continued presence of U.S. troops. Fortunately, the military situation had changed remarkably over the past year, and this enabled Hughes to be more flexible on that point. Dana Munro described Secretary Hughes' position as follows:

Hughes was disposed to make concessions on this point [continued presence of U.S. troops] in order to reach an agreement. The problem of maintaining order after the American withdrawal looked somewhat less formidable after several of the bandit leaders who had been operating in a small way in the eastern end of the island surrendered in April and May.<sup>50</sup>

Hughes, therefore, agreed to pull all American forces back to three centralized locations where they would continue to train the *Policia Nacional*. Training emphasis remained on developing a professional officer corps and basic constabulary duties for the enlisted men, and Marines would only engage in combat operations if the PND needed reinforcement during a serious disturbance.

This resolved the last major roadblock to compromise, and on 30 June 1922, American and Dominican leaders signed a memorandum of understanding for a "tentative Plan of Evacuation." After a summer of continued debate over some of the plan's details which resulted in no significant changes, the Hughes-Peynado Accord was published in Dominican newspapers on 23 September 1922. The agreement generally received a warm reception from local Dominicans, other Latin Americans, and citizens in the United States, and implementation of its

contents over the next two years brought an end to the United States' eight-year military occupation of the Dominican Republic.<sup>51</sup>

### A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Timing of the Hughes-Peynado Accord was no coincidence. It marked the culmination of several political and military successes by the United States which combined to: (1) defeat the insurgents or compel them to surrender and (2) force the the *pura y simple* nationalists to compromise or marginalize them as a viable political entity. In fact, it was the intertwined nature of the political and military aspects of the American campaign that made it so successful. The first event that eventually broke the political and military stalemate in the Dominican Republic was the 1920 U.S. presidential election. Warren Harding's criticism of President Wilson's interventionist foreign policy and the latter's subsequent promulgation of the Wilson Plan could not have sent a clearer message to the Military Government of Santo Domingo and the Marines serving under it – the United States would soon withdraw from the Dominican Republic.

This message reverberated throughout the small Caribbean island, and American military leaders there set about accomplishing Wilson's objectives with renewed vigor. The Military Government had long solved the problem of Dominican financial solvency through short-term control of the customs revenues and long-term improvements to the treasury and tax systems and enacting new land title laws. Yet, political stability (and its inherent building block of military security) continued to elude the Marines in 1920. The United States, therefore, installed new military leadership in 1921; Military Governor Robison, Brigadier General Harry Lee, and Lieutenant Colonel Presley Rixey all assumed new commands that year. The first sweeping change focused on reinvigorating development of a national constabulary, which entailed revamping the old *Guardia* into the *Policia Nacional*. This revitalization of the national

constabulary included appointing LtCol Rixey to establish a formal military training program centered on the new PND training centers at Haina and Santiago.

Then, just as Rixey's efforts were gaining ground on the military/security front, the Harding administration achieved success in the political realm. Shortly after taking office the U.S. Department of State issued the Harding Plan, which looked remarkably similar to the plan Woodrow Wilson had been advocating since before the initial Marine landings in 1916. Despite Harding's repeated efforts to vilify his predecessor's Caribbean policies in the 1920 presidential campaign, his virtually wholesale adoption of Wilson's goals in the Dominican Republic dashed the hopes of hard-line Dominican nationalists for a *pura y simple* American withdrawal. However, the Harding Plan did offer one important concession: the constabulary no longer had to be commanded by Americans, it only needed to be trained by Americans. Of course, it was Rixey's comprehensive plan to train the PND that made this compromise possible.

The U.S. Senate scored another political victory for American efforts in the Dominican Republic with its handling of the formal inquiry into alleged atrocities by American forces in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The Select Committee's final report described acts of abuse committed by American servicemen, which surely added to the censure then being heaped on the United States from both domestic and Latin American critics. However, the committee stopped short of calling for a full American withdrawal from the Dominican Republic. Had it done so, this could have brought the United States under intense political pressure to withdraw its forces from the Dominican Republic prior to accomplishing its objectives. By not calling for American withdrawal, the U.S. Senate bolstered President Harding's bargaining position with the Dominican nationalists. Thus, a Republican-controlled Senate supported a Republican President in his efforts to negotiate a phased American withdrawal according to a timeline dictated by the

United States. The Harding Plan was, of course, anathema to the hard-line Dominicans. However, after the U.S. issued a preliminary version of its report in December 1921, the Dominican nationalists found themselves marginalized by more moderate Dominican leaders who were willing to work within the parameters of the Harding Plan. Hence, it was a collaborative political-military effort by several facets of the U.S. government that defeated this last-bid effort by the Dominican nationalists to achieve a political victory.

However, it was the military campaign of 1921-22 that led directly to the Hughes-Peynado Accord and thus ended the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic. In order for Secretary of State Hughes to negotiate from a position of strength, insurgents in the eastern provinces of Seibo and Macoris had to be defeated in the field. General Harry Lee and Lieutenant Colonel William Harllee did exactly that with a comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign plan that rooted the insurgents out of their sanctuaries and compelled them to surrender. By combining U.S. Marines with indigenous troops in the *guardas campestres* and *Policia Nacional*, Lee and Harllee kept relentless pressure on the insurgents for several months. Thus, when the Military Government extended the olive branch in April 1922, within weeks every major rebel leader surrendered along with his subordinates. With the insurgency defeated, Secretary of State Hughes was able to negotiate the Hughes-Peynado Accord from a position of strength. When that document was published in September 1922, it accomplished the objectives that Woodrow Wilson had established eight years earlier.

Of course, signing of the Hughes-Peynado Accord did not enable the Marines to immediately board ships and come home. Instead, they concentrated their forces at the three large training centers and, for two more years, continued to develop the *Policia Nacional*. There was also progress on the Dominican political front. Despite a quick return to petty infighting

amongst most of the Dominican politicians, the provisional government did assume some powers from the United States on 21 October 1922. Two years later, Horacio Vasquez was elected President of the Dominican Republic in fair elections. General Harry Lee, who had become Military Governor, then handed over all remaining authority to the Dominican government on 31 June 1924 – the day of Vasquez's inauguration.<sup>52</sup> Three months later, on 18 September, the last Marines from the 2nd Brigade boarded ship and sailed away from the Dominican Republic.

The legacy of the American occupation of the Dominican Republic was controversial at the time and continues to be so into the present. In purely military terms, the venture was a success for the United States. Americans set out to stabilize the Dominican Republic in order to bolster the Monroe Doctrine and thwart any attempts by outside powers to gain influence over the Panama Canal region. This they did. Furthermore, the United States was able to implement the changes it felt were necessary in the Dominican government to ensure political stability and financial solvency. American forces did not land in the Dominican Republic for the next 40 years, and the Panama Canal was never threatened. However, American interventionist policies in the Caribbean somewhat tarnished the United States' image in the international arena, especially in Latin America. Some countries began to question American intentions, and resentment still exists over U.S. interventions in the Caribbean. Of course, the answer from the Dominican perspective is even more difficult. When Marines left in 1924, Dominicans had a strong central government, better schools, more roads, and a well-trained constabulary. However, six years later, Rafael Trujillo, commander of the *Policia Nacional*, seized power and forced a 31-year dictatorship on the Dominican people. Although his tenure was probably less painful on the country than the 70 years of revolution that preceded American intervention, this was hardly the long-term solution successive U.S. governments envisioned and sought.

<sup>1</sup> Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 238. See Appendix C for a brief description of the Dominican Republic in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>2</sup> Two years later, the Permanent Court at The Hague upheld the blockader's position to have their claims paid first and, in so doing, gave tacit approval to the use of armed force as a means of collecting international debts.

<sup>3</sup> The importance of the Panama Canal with respect to the United States was based on the writings of Alfred T. Mahan, whose seminal work, *The Influence of Seapower upon History* (1890), significantly impacted naval doctrine and national strategy throughout the world for almost a century. His guidance of never dividing a nation's battle fleet had a profound influence in the United States and made constructing a cross-isthmian canal a cornerstone of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century American defense policy. The United States' efforts to gain the rights to build a canal in Panama culminated in 1903 when it signed the Hay-Herran Treaty with Colombia. Thereafter, protecting and controlling the Panama Canal became one of the United States' highest national security objectives.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Dana G. Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900-1921* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 77.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-7.

<sup>6</sup> Bruce J. Calder, *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic During the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 3-4.

<sup>7</sup> Despite the classic anti-imperialist explanation that the United States intervened throughout Latin America for solely economic motives, Bruce Calder and virtually every other historian annotated in the bibliography did not find economic imperialism as a significant factor in the Dominican intervention. The U.S. investment in the Dominican Republic was comparatively small, and these economic interests were not threatened when the decision was made to intervene in 1916. Wilson's "missionary impulse" to implement fundamental political and economic changes and fears about encroachment by Germany and other European countries were the most important factors leading to intervention in the Dominican Republic. Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 22-23.

<sup>8</sup> Dana G. Munro, *The United States and the Caribbean Republics, 1921-1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 44.

<sup>9</sup> Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy*, 269-274.

<sup>10</sup> Although many Americans during this era referred to the entire country of the Dominican Republic as Santo Domingo, I have followed the contemporary definition of Santo Domingo which refers specifically to the capital city. The only exceptions will be in direct quotations from other sources or when referring to the official title of the Military Government of Santo Domingo.

<sup>11</sup> *Campaign Order No. 1* issued May 3, 1916, by Commander W. S. Crosley (USN) aboard the U.S.S. *Prairie*, quoted in Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 238.

<sup>12</sup> For more detailed accounts of the initial American landings and this phase of conventional operations, see Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 8-12; Stephen M. Fuller and Graham A. Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924* (Washington: History and Museums Division, U.S. Marine Corps, 1974), 7-24; Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the*

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*United States Marine Corps* (New York: Macmillan, 1980), 190-196; and Frederick Wise, *A Marine Tells It to You* (New York: J.H. Sears, 1929), 138-143.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from U.S. Minister William Russell to Secretary of State, dated 25 July 1916 in National Archives Records Administration (Washington, D.C.), Record Group 45, WA-7, Box 755. Hereinafter cited as RG-45 with accompanying Box number.

<sup>14</sup> Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 11.

<sup>15</sup> When Henriquez arrived in Cuba, he initiated an international publicity campaign to champion Dominican rights for self-rule and demanded an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of American forces from his country.

<sup>16</sup> Executive Order No. 47, reprinted in Charles F. Williams, "La Guardia Nacional Dominicana," *Marine Corps Gazette* 3, no. 3 (Sep 1918): 195-199.

<sup>17</sup> Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 27-30.

<sup>18</sup> Troop strength hovered around 1600 during the military occupation, then finally rebounded to a overall high of 3007 in February 1919, as many troops destined for or returning from France were redirected to the Caribbean. However, this only served as a temporary reprieve, since this number fell again when wartime draftees and enlistees were sent home. Troop levels did not rise again significantly until the fall of 1921 when the Marines were faced with quickly defeating the insurgency before political events forced them to withdraw completely. See Annex F for a table of troop strength levels.

<sup>19</sup> "Report of Organization, Duties, Operations, and Cost of Maintenance of the *Policia Nacional Dominicana* since Date of Organization" in Dominican Republic Geographic Files, U.S. Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, Virginia. Hereinafter cited as Dominican Republic Geographic Files.

<sup>20</sup> Fuller, 47.

<sup>21</sup> Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 57; Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 29; Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 195; Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 274; .

<sup>22</sup> Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 280.

<sup>23</sup> See Annex D for more information regarding the root causes and nature of the insurgency, along with a discussion of the various groups that resisted American occupation, their motives for doing so, and the methods they used to accomplish their goals.

<sup>24</sup> The literal translation of *caudillo* from Spanish meant "leader" or "boss," but in the Dominican Republic it actually had more authoritative or military connotations, such as warlord or strongman. See Annex D for a more thorough discussion of caudilloism and its role in the Dominican insurgency.

<sup>25</sup> See Annex E for an organizational chart that shows the basic command structure in the Dominican Republic during the American military occupation.

<sup>26</sup> Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 33-40; Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 133-162.

<sup>27</sup> There were no sustained troop strength increases until November 1920. See Annex F.

<sup>28</sup> Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 47.

<sup>29</sup> Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 54-66; Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 45-52; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 195.

<sup>30</sup> See Annex D for a more detailed discussion of the Dominican nationalist leaders and their traditional role in Dominican society and politics.

<sup>31</sup> Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 183-212.

<sup>32</sup> The Wilson Plan was written by the State Department's Chief of Latin American Division, Sumner Welles – the same man who would later write the Harding Plan and help negotiate the Hughes-Peynado Accord that ended the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic.

<sup>33</sup> Sumner Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard: The Dominican Republic, 1844-1924*. 2 vols. (Mamaroneck, NY: Paul P. Appel, 1966; reprint of 1926 edition), 831 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

<sup>34</sup> Edward A. Fellowes, "Training Native Troops in Santo Domingo," *Marine Corps Gazette* 8, no. 4 (Dec 1923): 216.

<sup>35</sup> Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 49.

<sup>36</sup> Williams, "La Guardia Nacional Dominicana," passim; Fellowes, "Training Native Troops in Santo Domingo," passim; Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 48-52; Calder, *Impact of Intervention* 58-62.

<sup>37</sup> Munro, *United States and the Caribbean Republics*, 47. Munro was a member of the State Department's Latin American Division (1921-25) and was Chief of the Latin American Division (1929-30).

<sup>38</sup> "Proclamation of the Military Governor," 14 June 1922. RG-45, Box 760.

<sup>39</sup> Although LtCol Rixey was not appointed Commandant of the PND until 1 June 1921 (only two weeks before the Harding Plan was released), he had served as the Colonel Commandant of the *Guardia Republicana* (another Dominican constabulary force) since 1920. According to Lieutenant Edward A. Fellowes, Rixey's plan for training and implementing a Dominican constabulary dated to 1920. Presumably, it was his visionary approach that prompted his appointment as Commandant of the PND. Hence, it is reasonable to believe that those shaping the political aspects of the Harding Plan were familiar with the recent overhaul of *Guardia*/PND and, therefore, could concede the original requirement that the constabulary be commanded by American officers. It was a common understanding that the constabulary would only be commanded Americans until Dominican officers could competently assume these positions. With the overhaul of the PND, this prospect seemed close at hand. Fellowes, "Training Native Troops," 216-218.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Munro, *United States and the Caribbean Republics*, 47.

<sup>41</sup> Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 212.

<sup>42</sup> Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 207-218 and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 203.

<sup>43</sup> The Commanding General of the 2nd Provision Marine Brigade commanded all Marines in the Dominican Republic and reported to the U.S. Military Governor. The latter was filled during the occupation by a succession of senior officers in the U.S. Navy, usually Rear Admirals. See Annex E for an organizational chart.

<sup>44</sup> General Lee, however, deemed these cordon operations a failure because they alienated the locals, failed to trap any of the prominent *caudillos*, and actually increased the number of guerrilla attacks. Ironically, he ceased the cordon operations less than two months before every major guerrilla leader and their followers surrendered. Another assessment of the cordon operations is that they actually helped break the back of the insurgency by driving a wedge between the locals and insurgents, since the former no longer found it safe to provide sanctuary for the latter.

<sup>45</sup> Forming the *guardas campestres* was not BGen Lee's idea. Representatives from the sugar estates in the eastern provinces recommended the idea to Military Governor Robison in



November 1921. Lee eventually approved the formation of these units in April 1922. However, the Dominicans who served in them had to be recommended for such duty by a municipal or sugar estate official, and Lee preferred to recruit men who "have suffered some injury at the hands of the bandits and are eager to operate against them." The Marine leading each unit was an officer or non-commissioned officer. BGen Harry Lee, "Special Report, 1922," Dominican Republic Geographic Files.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Robison's ultimatum to the Dominican leaders: they needed to begin implementing the Harding Plan by holding elections, or the U.S. would withdraw any concessions made thus far and continue the occupation until most of the public works projects were completed and the *Policia Nacional* was fully functional. (Letter from Secretary of State Welles to the Secretary of the Navy, 10 February 1922, contained in "Quarterly Report of the Military Governor of Santo Domingo," 22 April 1922, RG-45, Box 760.)

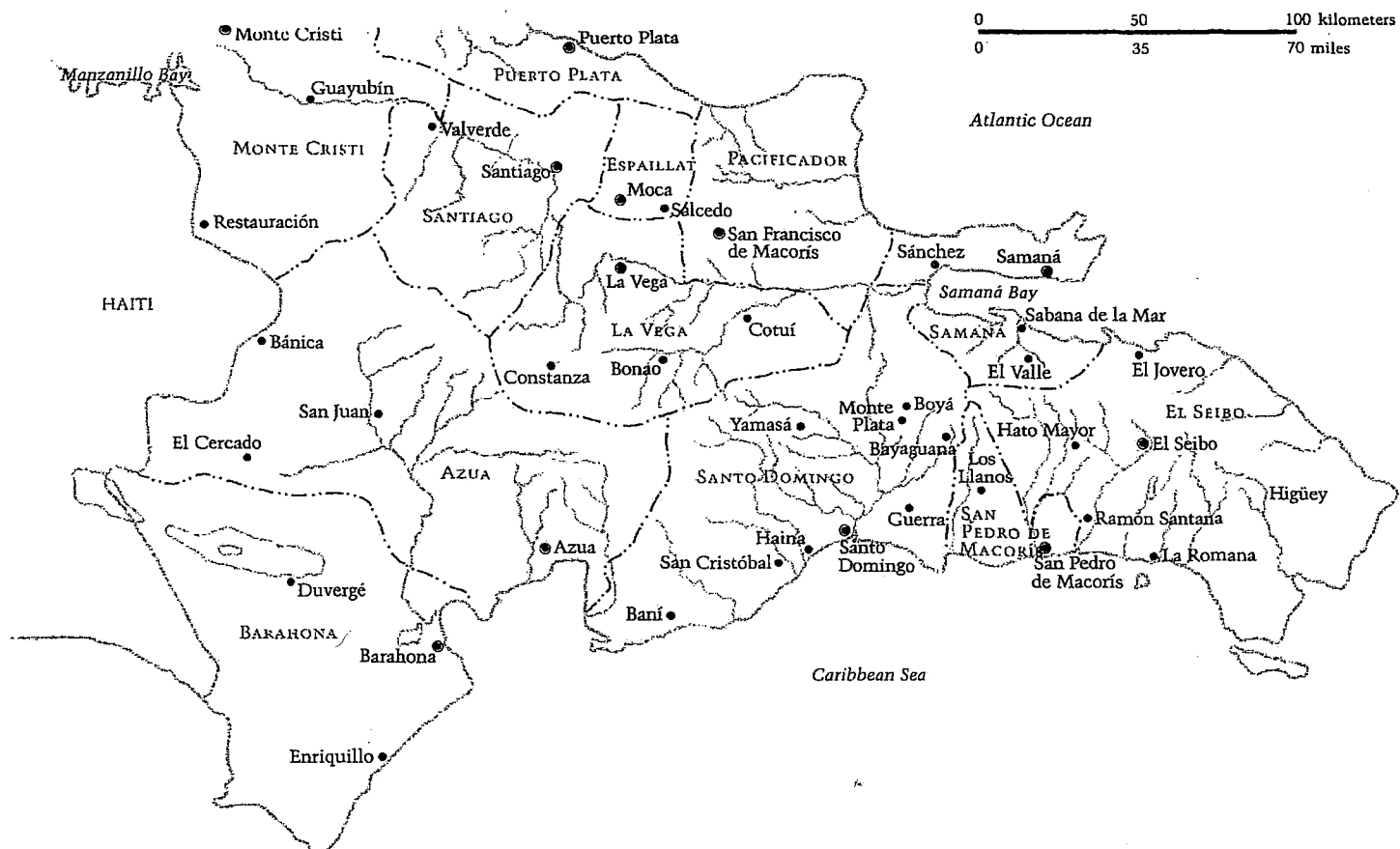
<sup>49</sup> Peynado was particularly suited for this task because he had not yet been politically active during occupation and, therefore, avoided being labeled as a hard-line nationalist by the Americans. He also had an excellent command of the English language and was open to compromise

<sup>50</sup> Munro, *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy*, 54.

<sup>51</sup> Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 221-229.

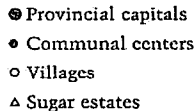
<sup>52</sup> BGen Harry Lee assumed the duties of Acting Military Governor on 21 October 1922 (the same day the provisional government assumed power); he then was appointed actual Military Governor in March 1923. However, he retained command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Provisional Marine Brigade and continued in this dual capacity until dissolution of the Military Government on 12 July 1924, after which he departed the country.

Appendix A:  
Map - Dominican Republic, 1916



Source: Bruce J. Calder, *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic During the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), xxiii.

## Appendix B:



*U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), xxix.

## Appendix C: The Dominican Republic in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

The Dominican Republic is located on Hispaniola, which is the second-largest island in the Caribbean's Greater Antilles archipelago.<sup>1</sup> It comprises the eastern two-thirds of the island, while the western third is home to Haiti. The Dominican Republic's land mass is approximately 19,000 square miles, which makes it about one-third larger than the state of Maryland. The Dominican Republic was also the site of the first permanent European settlement in the Americas, and its capital, Santo Domingo, was the first colonial capital in the Western Hemisphere. Except for a brief period in which the Spanish ceded Hispaniola to the French (1795-1808), the former ruled what would become the Dominican Republic from the time Christopher Columbus first landed in 1492 until they granted the Dominicans their independence in 1821. However, nine weeks after the Spanish relinquished control, Haitian forces invaded the Dominican Republic and placed it under Haitian rule. The Dominicans fought a prolonged struggle against the Haitians in which they finally gained lasting independence in 1844.

When the United States intervened in 1916, the Dominican Republic was an underdeveloped country. Its population consisted of less than one million people, 85% of whom were farmers living in the countryside. There were only two significant cities: Santo Domingo with 21,000 residents and Santiago with 14,000. Sugar industry formed the basis of the Dominican economy, accounting for more than half of the total exports in 1916. However, the overwhelming majority of all Dominicans lived in poverty, since the Dominican elites or foreign investors reaped virtually all of the economic benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> This account is based on Bruce J. Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, xxiv-xxxii; and Sumner Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard*, 1-358.

Further hampering economic development in the Dominican Republic was a strong sense of regionalism. The transportation and communication networks were either non-existent or in disrepair, which left the rural regions physically and politically isolated from the cities. In fact, there was not even a suitable road to connect Santo Domingo and Santiago. Hence, Dominican economics and society were dominated by regionalism that divided the country between the northern region of Cibao, centered around Santiago, and the southern region which included Santo Domingo. The net effect was that, in 1916, the Dominican Republic was a country that was economically and politically fractured.

## Appendix D: Insurgency in the Eastern Provinces

The insurgent movement that contested American occupation in the Dominican Republic from 1916-1924 is partly explained by an examination of Dominican social, geographic, and economic conditions in the eastern provinces of El Seibo and San Pedro de Macoris. It is important to differentiate the eastern provinces from the rest of the country, because the insurgency took root almost exclusively in El Seibo and San Pedro de Macoris. This is partly due to the fact that the *caudillo* tradition was strongest there. The literal translation of *caudillo* from Spanish meant "leader" or "boss," but in the Dominican Republic it actually had more authoritative or military connotations, such as warlord or strongman. Throughout Dominican history, *caudillos* would either vie for political office themselves or throw their support (and armed followers) behind a particular candidate. Of course, *caudillo* support came at a price, and once elected, political officials in the capital city of Santo Domingo were expected to reward their supporting *caudillos* with political favors or financial stipends.<sup>1</sup>

Despite repeated attempts to break free from the power exerted by the eastern *caudillos*, the Dominican central government found it impossible due, in large part, to the geographic and demographic conditions in El Seibo and San Pedro de Macoris. There were virtually no roads or modern communications in these densely-thicketed provinces, and the thinly dispersed peasants who worked their own land barely etched out a subsistence living. Those peasants who lived along the coast often worked as laborers for one of the many European-owned sugar plantations. The shabby treatment and low wages they typically received from the Europeans made them

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<sup>1</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 116-127; Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 33-40; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 200-201.

pugnacious, intolerant of foreigners, and often-loyal supporters of a local *caudillo* who claimed to be fighting on their behalf.<sup>2</sup>

However, the individual insurgents (peasants) were different from the insurgent leaders (local *caudillos*), who were also different from the nationalist political leaders (Dominican social elites). Each group had different grievances, resisted in different ways, and had different goals. The peasants resented foreigners primarily because they believed (with good reason) that the ever-expanding sugar plantations were acquiring their small private land plots. Local *caudillos* skillfully played on this resentment and convinced the peasants to join their fight against the foreign invaders. However, in general, the *caudillos* cared little about the peasants concerns; they were usually focused only on the personal wealth and power they gained from banditry and extortion. The *caudillos* simply co-opted the peasants into their fight against anyone who contested their traditional hold on power in the east.<sup>3</sup>

The nationalists, on the other hand, were social and intellectual elites born from wealthy Dominican families and men for whom privilege and positions of power were considered a birthright.<sup>4</sup> Although they were often well educated, the nationalist leaders could be just as rapacious as the *caudillos*. In fact, prior to American intervention they struggled against the *caudillos* for the same reasons the Americans did during the occupation – the *caudillos* simply refused to submit to any external authority. Furthermore, since the nationalists lived predominantly in the larger cities, they cared even less about peasant grievances than the *caudillos* did.

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<sup>2</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 116-127; Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 33-40; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 200-201.

<sup>3</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 116-127; Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 33-40; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 200-201.

<sup>4</sup> The most prominent nationalist leaders during the occupation were Francisco and Federico Henriquez, Horacio Vasquez, and Federico Velasquez.

The Dominican insurgency, therefore, was not a people's revolt with all parties fighting for the same cause. The armed rebellion in the east by peasants and *caudillos* had virtually nothing to do with the international political movement put forward by the nationalists. Peasants, *caudillos*, and nationalists may have drawn strength from each other, and their intermediate goals may have intersected with expelling U.S. forces from their country, but all three groups generally fought for their own narrow self-interests and goals.<sup>5</sup>

The Military Government and individual Marines also played a role in fomenting the Dominican insurgency by their heavy-handed methods that fueled local resentment. Most of these acts constituted abuses of power as Americans attempted to establish law and order. The Military Government's initial proclamation set in place strict censorship rules and revoked all permits to carry firearms. Censorship rules infuriated the political elites because it stymied their ability to mobilize the masses. In fact, President Henriquez left the country in December 1916 in order to wage an information war from Cuba, something he could not do in the Dominican Republic under the American occupation. As for disarming the population, this proved a difficult task for the Marines. After decades of successive revolutions, the Dominican Republic resembled an armed camp. Thus, disarming and arresting Dominicans brought Marines into frequent and often hostile contact with local civilians. The Military Government also established provost courts headed by Marine officers who had virtually no training for such duties. Dominican complaints that the military courts convicted Dominicans on flimsy evidence and ignored most Marine abuses proved particularly infuriating to many local civilians.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 116-127; Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 33-40; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 200-201.

<sup>6</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 127-133; Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 200-201; and Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 273.



The first hint of a growing insurgency occurred on 10 January 1917, when 76 Marines landed in the eastern coastal city of San Pedro de Macoris to begin establishing American control in the eastern provinces. However, contrary to the Dominican apathy Marines encountered when carrying out similar duties in other parts of the country, the Marines met with immediate resistance in Macoris. The Military Government then was forced to reinforce the town with 250 additional Marines. March and April remained relatively calm, but that was interrupted in May when rebels under the leadership of a notorious eastern *caudillo*, named Vicentico Evangelista, captured two American civilians and killed them with machetes. However, in a remarkable feat of persuasion and deception, Marines obtained Vicentico's surrender, along with 48 of his dedicated followers. Yet, instead of quelling what was a limited uprising, this event actually helped ignite a full-blown rebellion when Dominicans learned that Marines had killed Vicentico while he "tried to escape." Regardless of whether or not his death was legitimate, Dominican perceptions were more important than the actual events: "The nearly universal belief was that the marines had deliberately murdered Vicentico."<sup>7</sup> Reports of other insurgents being killed during similar "escape attempts" were far too common for Dominicans to draw any other conclusion.<sup>8</sup>

In the spring of 1918, insurgent activity exploded in the eastern provinces. This was largely a counterpunch by the eastern *caudillos* in response to attempts by the Military Government to assert its authority in the east. However, the heavy-handed methods Marines used while disarming the population probably exacerbated the problem. Marine leaders made numerous attempts to safeguard against such excesses by junior Marines and *Guardia* soldiers, but this proved exceptionally difficult given the leadership vacuum resulting from the war in

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<sup>7</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 141.

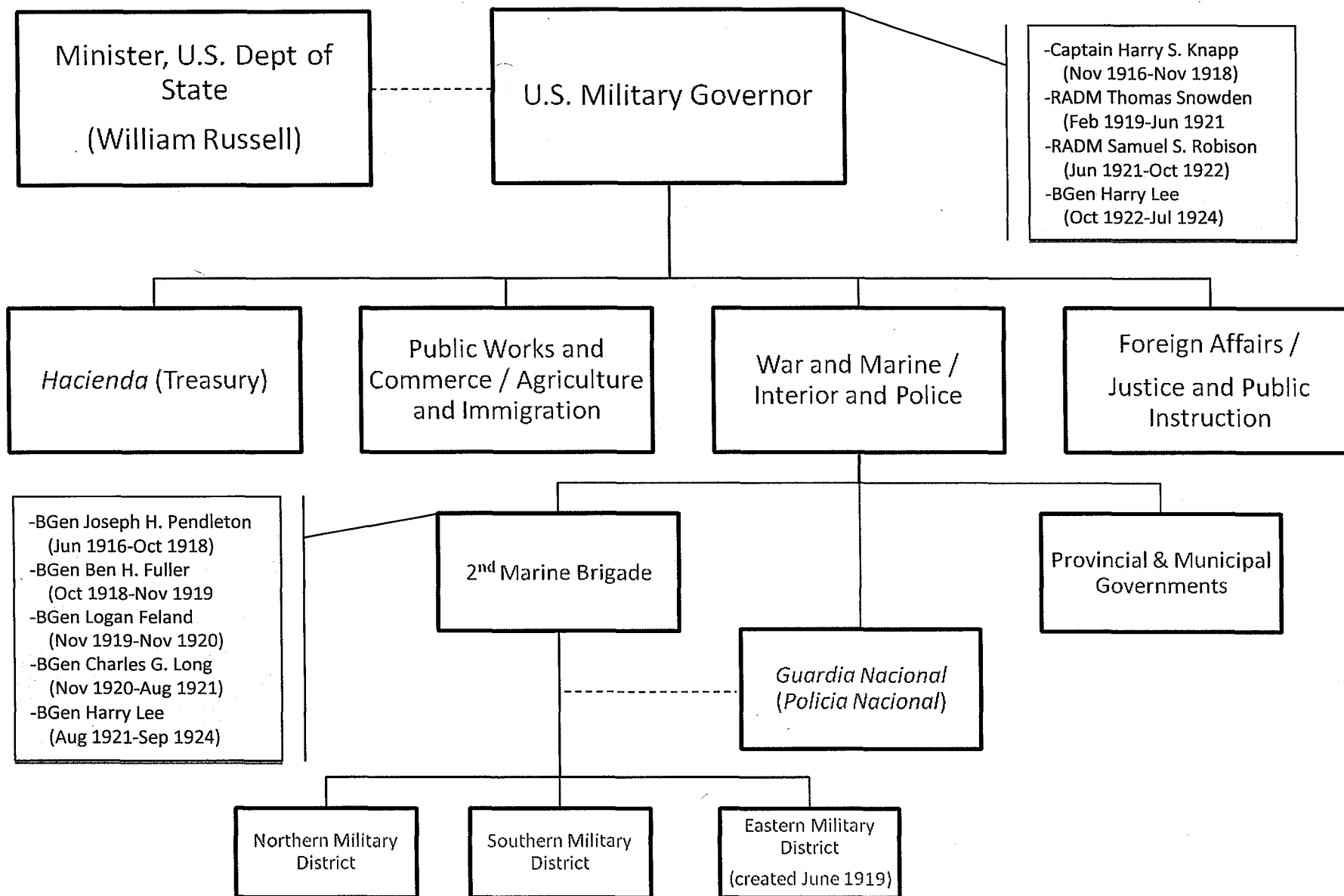
<sup>8</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 134-143; Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 36; and Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 278-279.

France and the fact that junior Marines often operated in eight-man detachments that were 40 miles from their company headquarters. The Military Government further infuriated the populace with its continued use of repressive censorship laws and arbitrary use of military courts. The net result was that, by the spring of 1918, the Marines faced hundreds of armed insurgents in the eastern provinces of Seibo and Macaris. It would take the Marines four more years to defeat them.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Calder, 127-133; Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 29-33; and Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 280-281;

# Appendix E: Organizational Chart of the U.S. Military Government of Santo Domingo



Source: Stephen M. Fuller and Graham A. Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924* (Washington: History and Museums Division, U.S. Marine Corps, 1974), 53.

Appendix F: Marine Personnel Strength in the Dominican Republic, 1916-24

<u>Month</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Personnel</u>
May	1916	632
November	1916	2219
May	1917	1683
June	1918	1635
October	1918	1964
February	1919	3007
December	1919	1970
March	1920	1838
November	1920	2267
July	1921	2323
October	1921	2811
January	1922	2576
November	1922	2189
February	1923	2305
May	1923	1946
March	1924	2076
July	1924	890
September	1924	133
October	1924	0

Source: Stephen M. Fuller and Graham A. Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924* (Washington: History and Museums Division, U.S. Marine Corps, 1974), 53.

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### Commentary on Sources

Of all the primary sources listed below, the most beneficial were those found in the various archives. The National Archives in Washington, D.C. held the most extensive collection of material pertaining to this study, with the vast majority of documents located in Record Group 38 (Records of the Military Government of Santo Domingo, 1916-1924) and Record Group 45 (Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library). With over 30 boxes of material, these collections held virtually every operational and intelligence report from the District Commanders as well as the quarterly reports of the Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Brigade and the Military Governor. The U.S. Marine Corps History Division located on Marine Corps Base Quantico also held valuable material. Many of the documents found in their geographic and biographical files are duplicates of what can be found in Record Groups 38 and 45. However, these files also contain additional documents such as newspaper clippings, pamphlets, informal reports, and photographs. Although the U.S. Marine Corps Archives & Special Collections at the Gray Research Center in Quantico has an impressive collection of personal papers and other sources, unfortunately it did not have any useful documents pertaining to the American occupation of the Dominican Republic. The personal papers of William C. Harrlee documented a later period of his life.

Almost as valuable as the archival material were the numerous *Marine Corps Gazette* articles written by Marines who served in the Dominican Republic – discussed in the following chronological order of publication. In 1918, Major Charles F. Williams published the first article pertaining to operations in the Dominican Republic, in which he chronicled his service in the

*Guardia Nacional* and offered a copy of the Executive Order that founded the organization. The next year, Colonel George C. Thorpe (Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Brigade) discussed the qualifications for Marine service in the *Guardia* and the necessity of establishing a school for Marines to give them the necessary training. Lieutenant Colonel Henry Davis described his service in San Pedro de Macoris and offered additional comments on what qualities were required of Marines on Dominican duty. Major Samuel M. Harrington's article offered limited primary source material through a few reprinted reports of tactical actions in the Dominican Republic. Lieutenant Robert C. Kilmartin served as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade's Law Officer, and his article was a reprint of guidance promulgated by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Commander, BGen Harry Lee, on the proper attitude Marines should have towards the Dominican people. Lieutenant Leslie H. Wellman's description of map-making and writing of the Dominican country handbooks as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade's Intelligence Officer and Director of Mapping was not particularly useful for this study. As one of the founders and lead instructors of the Haina training school for the *Policia Nacional*, Lieutenant Edward A. Fellowes' article on training Dominican troops was one of the most useful articles published in the *Marine Corps Gazette* on the American occupation of the Dominican Republic.

In addition, a significant number of primary source government documents have been published for wider dissemination. Of these, the State Department's *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* was the most useful for synchronizing the political and military aspects of the campaign. However, the pertinent volumes of the *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy* were of limited use, since they contained only brief discussions of events in the Dominican Republic. The report of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo offered several accounts of atrocities and abuses of power committed by Marines

during the occupation. It was also useful to note the changes in counterinsurgency doctrine over the past 70 years by comparing the *Small Wars Manual* with *MCWP 3-33.5: Counterinsurgency*.

There have also been several personal accounts and other studies published by individuals who played important roles during the American occupation. Captain Frederick Wise's *A Marine Tells It to You* offers an excellent first-hand account of the initial Marine landings in 1916. Dana G. Munro's two volume study on American foreign policy in Latin America is a mix of both primary and secondary material. Munro was a member of the State Department's Latin American Division (1921-25) and was Chief of the Latin American Division (1929-30). The Latin American Division consisted of less than 20 people throughout most of the period of this study; hence, Munro had first-hand knowledge of virtually every State Department activity with the Dominican Republic. Sumner Welles' *Naboth's Vineyard* is another two-volume work that contains both primary and secondary material. Although published in 1926, *Naboth's Vineyard* remains one of the most comprehensive studies of early Dominican history in english. Yet, Welles was also directly involved in many aspects of the American occupation. He wrote the Harding Plan in 1921 and was the chief negotiator and implementor of the Hughes-Peynado Accord. He, therefore, offers a unique first-hand account of those events.

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